[4 cont.]

101 184 shall not enumerate them separately. According to my classification the I in Kweichow may be divided into Chung-chia, Sui-chia, Tung-chia and Chuang-chia; the Miao may be divided into Hê Miao, Hua Miao, Ch'ing Miao, Pê Miao and Hung Miao. The Hê Miao and Hu Miao are more numerous and occupy a large territory. The Hê Miao live in the various hsien districts in the southeast, and the Hua Miao in the northwestern districts. The Hung Miao, Ch'ing Miao and Pê Miao are fewer in number and live in some narrow strips of land. The Hung Miao are limited to T'ung-jen and Sung-t'ao in the northeast; the Ch'ing Miao, to Kweiyang, Ting-fan, Ch'ing-chen and An-shun in the middle of the province; and the Pê Miao, to Kweiyang, Kwei-ting and Lung-li also in the middle. The Chung-chia and the Tung-chia among the I are the most numerous and occupy wider areas, being chiefly in the middle and the south. The Tung-chia are mostly in the southeast corner, and the Sui-chia in Li-po, Tu-shan, San-ho, Tu-chiang, and Hsia-chiang in the south. A small number of Tung-chia [Chuang-chia?] emigrated several decades ago from I-pei, Lo-ch'eng and San-chiang in Kwangsi and settled along the commercial highways in the border regions.

181 [147] 3) Characteristics. Physically, the Miao-I are a very sturdy and healthy people. They work hard all year round from sunrise to sunset, barefooted, wearing little in wind and rain, and living with Nature itself. Being a simple-minded people, they have few vices. Before opium was banned in [276] Kweichow, only a few Miao-I were addicted to this drug with the result that they are healthier than the Chinese in every respect. They can endure hardship and are perseverant and patient. Their outstanding character is honesty and straightforwardness: anyone who can earn their trust will find them faithful and true to the last without ever faltering. If you ask them to leap into the flame they would do so without hesitation. But their knowledge being limited, they have little judgment, are stubborn and tardy, and lack the will to progress. They do everything according to what is handed down from their ancestors, [5] and it is often difficult to explain things to them.

[150 cont.]

167 175 At the time of the first of these invasions, several thousands of "Meo," marching in a fighting body, devastated everything on their passage through southern Yunnan and made their way as far as Annamese territory (region of Dong-Van), whence they violently ejected the "Thai" and "Nan" groupings who were settled there.

The second invasion, that of 1860, of which the memory is still living in the hearts of many of the "Thai," was still more widespread than the preceding one and pushed far forward into the Annamese territories from Dong-Van and Quan-Ba as far as the neighborhood of Phu-Yen-Binh, after defeating the Annamese troops which attempted to stop it, and after spreading terror abroad by nameless atrocities.

This invasion was stemmed by troops which came from the Delta and were supported by numerous elephants. The latter threw [361] panic into the ranks of the "Méo," who sought refuge in the high mountains, where they are still established.

As has been said above, the "Méo" came to Tonkin long after 175 the "Thai" and the "Man." They have carried on with the latter groups numerous local fights for the possession of farming areas, struggles sometimes very violent and prolonged.

Stronger and more energetic than their adversaries, they would 147 361 perhaps have succeeded in chasing them completely from Upper Tonkin if they had been able to acclimate themselves to the low alti- 175 tudes. But we have already seen in Chapter I that the "Méo" are unable to live in the low valleys and that their habitat is found to be confined to heights superior to 900 or 1,000 meters. Thanks to this physiological characteristic, "Thai" and "Man" have been able to re-enter into possession of the lands of which they had been momentarily ravished, and thus the existing echelonment of the various groups by successive altitudes was established: "Méo" in the high mountains; "Man" at the middle altitudes; "Thai" in the plains and the low, irrigated valleys.

According to a number of educated "Méo" or Chinese of the 101 region of Muongkhuong, with whom we have had very frequent conversations, the "Méo" form more than fifty different tribes, but they are represented in Tonkin only by certain members of these tribes:

[150 cont.]

101 White Meo ("Peu-Méo")
Black Meo ("Heu-Méo")
Red Meo ("Hong-Méo")
Meo of the flowers ("Hoa-Méo")
"Méo-moung-cha"

[151] These various tribes have characters, mores, and dialects only very slightly different. They are melting little by little [184] into one another and scarcely differ except in the details of feminine costume. Hence, we shall not study them separately, as we have done for the tribes of the preceding groups, and we shall restrict ourselves to pointing out in passing the peculiarities of each of them.

The "Méo" men are generally of medium or small stature, 142 robust, hardy, with strong legs, developed by the long climbs in the [147] mountains and the carrying of heavy burdens. Some "Méo" are of large stature, but these are not the toughest. The women are smaller than the men. Very sweet and graceful during their youth, they soon become very clumsy and heavy. Their breasts are extremely well [163] developed but deformed by their numerous progeny. The birth rate [165] is very high; the infant mortality, likewise.

The "Méo" have very coarse, very black hair. It is not rare [143] to find among them individuals who are blond or even albino, however.

273 The "Méo," very sober in normal times, seizes every opportunity to become drunk and to make good cheer. He often contracts [164] pulmonary diseases due to his heedlessness and to the bad conditions under which he lives.

147 It is impossible to acclimate him to low altitudes, where he immediately falls sick and rapidly becomes dispirited.

The "Méo" who have established irrigated rice fields have 24/ carried out this work along high mountain valleys. Yet they do not 36/ live near these planted areas, in spite of the relatively high altitude of the latter. As soon as the daily work is finished, they climb up again to their villages, which always remain located near the summits (see photo 428, Plate 43).

157 The "Méo" is of a gay disposition, very independent, courage- 609 ous, and extremely candid. Very hospitable, he always welcomes

[158 cont.]

361 "Méo" villages, the hygienic conditions in them are questionable
364 enough, especially during the winter when the temperature frequently drops [159] below freezing. The "Méo" spend the days and the nights of winter squatting or sleeping about the kitchen hearth and neglect to put any extra clothing on when they go outdoors. It is
164 clear that under these conditions the pulmonary maladies which have already been spoken of are extremely frequent and that they cause real havoc among the old people and the young children.

Smallpox frequently rages among the "Méo," but like all primitive people who are not poisoned by the abuse of medicines
● [147] for generations, they react marvelously to the simplest remedies. In 1911, a serious epidemic of smallpox ravaged a very large vil-
[775] lage in the region of Pha-Long, causing five or six deaths daily. All the inhabitants were vaccinated the same day, old and young, healthy persons or those already attacked. From that moment, no further deaths occurred.

Maize is the basic food of the "Méo." It is boiled, steamed,
262 or parched, or reduced to meal in order to be eaten in the form
[252] of cakes. The "Méo" also cultivate mountain rice, but like the
243 "Man," they are coming more and more to cultivate permanent irrigated rice fields, the working of which is easier and more remunerative. To this end they have taken over as much as possible of the favorable terrain, valley bottoms or sides of hillocks on which water may be brought by a simple canalization, and have laid out these areas into terraced rice fields where they often successively
[249] cultivate rice and opium. (See photos 135 and 428, Plate 43, showing the rice fields after the harvest, and photo 184, Plate 41, which shows a large rice field used for the cultivation of opium, the latter photo taken March 31, 1912.)

Aside from maize and rice, the "Méo" eat buckwheat and many
262 vegetables, which they cook in water with a little salt: potatoes,
[252] string beans, peas, beans, cucumbers, turnips, eggplants, pumpkins, and so on. The use of meat (fowl, game, domestic animals) is reserved for ceremonies and banquets, which the "Méo" never miss a chance for. They never eat horseflesh.

[163 cont.]

631 government with the functions of an administrator, with the title
648 of "t'ou-sseu" (administrator of barbarian country). This personage has retained a certain moral influence over the neighboring Tonkinese regions but naturally has no administrative authority over these populations.

The "Méo" settled in Tonkin are subject to Annamese law and amenable to the various native and European courts. Most of their
[627] differences are adjusted on the spot, according to the special customs of each tribe. When there is truly no means of settling the affair, the case is brought before higher jurisdiction.

[164] The "Méo" greatly dread the European courts, not so
147 much because of the severity of their sentences, but because these
648 courts most frequently sit in the towns situated at low altitude, where the "Méo" are unable to live. It has quite frequently happened to us to have to judge certain "Méo," the importance of whose crimes exceeded our competence. Upon the announcement of their being sent before the court of the resident of Laokay (altitude: 90 meters) the defendants threw themselves at our feet, saying: "Kill me at once, for if you send me to Laokay, I am sure to die there."

The "Méo" family is not united by as strong ties as the fami-
593 lies of the other groups. Here again is found another manifestation
866 of the spirit of independence of the "Méo," who accept no constraint, even that of the paternal authority when it becomes too annoying. Boys and girls are raised at random, without control and without advice, obeying freely the dictates of their will and their instincts. They part company with their family when it pleases them. However, one son always remains in the paternal household to keep up the cultivation of the fields belonging to the family.

769 Ancestral worship, which constitutes elsewhere so strong a family tie, is observed by the "Méo" in the most summary fashion.

Upon the death of the father, it is the mother who remains head
768 of the family and proprietress of the various belongings, real and
[428] personal. When the mother dies in her turn, the personal property (money, utensils, animals, crops) are divided among the male children. The eldest son or that one of the sons who remains settled in the paternal home becomes head of the family and cultivates the

131 /131/ As we have seen, the characteristic Miao AES
of the Meo is their
living at high altitudes and their difficulty in acclimating in the lower valleys. In fact they seek to compensate for a lower altitude by a higher altitude. They require a severe climate, which they enjoyed on the high plateau of Yunnan and Szechwan and which they were forced to evacuate. They live especially on limestone peaks, and when some families live at the bottoms of cirques, the altitude of these goes up at least to a thousand meters. They prefer steep slopes where their little house appears to be suspended like a cage on the side of a wall.

Section 2

Physical and Moral Natures

142 The Meo is short and thick-set, his average height must be
147 about 1.58 meters. He is right to be proud of the name Meo which
143 was given to him by the Annamese as a contemptuous title. As a matter of fact, he climbs like a cat. Along trails where we must use hands and knees, he may be seen going ahead slowly but with supple ease, even though he often is carrying a loaded pack-basket on his back. His resistance to fatigue is very great while he remains above 800 meters altitude, below this he thinks he is in danger of being taken ill in the hot season.

142 The Meo has a nearly white complexion, hard and prominent
157 features, brown eyes and hair like all the inhabitants of Indochina, aside from a few unusual specimens with reddish hair and blue eyes.
[461] He is as hard-working as the Thai is indolent. More courageous than most of the natives, he would be as dangerous to have as an enemy as he has been useful to us as an ally on certain occasions, such as
562 the conquest of Dongquan in 1893. The Meo woman is not pretty.
142 She is a crude country-woman and a hard worker whose sturdiness is incompatible with all grace and style. However, the young women attract one's eye by the freshness of their pink and white faces, the air of health and vigor which they give forth, and their well-developed figures, which are emphasized by their very picturesque costumes. /132/ The high pitch and the weakness of their voice makes it resemble a small girl's. In short, youth and freshness endow the crude woman of the mountain with the same allure as all women. Unfortunately, like her neighbors of the valleys, she is subjected to hard toil in the fields at an early age. Moreover, she marries young and the cares of maternity added to those of house-keeping cause her to lose her shape and to take away her fresh appearance very quickly.

Miao AE5
AKha AO4

M /460 cont./
181 to observe this talent for languages. The Meau usually speaks
[191] at least one and usually two or more foreign languages in addition to his mother tongue. To possess knowledge is regarded among the Meau as wise; a person without knowledge is stupid, as they say. It was often expressed: one who masters life,
M [46] knows how to do the work in the house and in the fields properly,
[555] is wise. The desire for the best performance is already shown by this attitude, and likewise by the competitive games of the children (see the chapter, "Life in the Community," the section, "Children at Play and Work").

M 181 Almost all the authors mention the indomitable desire
648 for freedom of the Meau, which is already apparent from their historical traditions and the organization of their army, as well as their aversion to being ruled by members of other peoples. Abadie (3) asserts: "It is necessary to mention the repugnance

3. Page 163.

with which the Meau suffer their subordination under a Thai chief. Even if this is limited merely to trifling matters which only rarely affect the life of the Meau..." Savina (4) also

4. II, p. 232.

emphasizes this desire for independence, and Lajonquière (5)

5. II, p. 302.

gives a brief outline characterization: "The 'Meau' is regarded as an intelligent and skillful worker. The characteristic trait of his moral attitude is his deep love of freedom. At the slightest punishment or limitation, he sets out with all his belongings to seek a corner where he will find freedom. He is courageous and daring, keeps his word, and is open in his speech."

A Moreover, I found the Meau physically strong, hardened,
M and capable of great resistance against hunger, thirst, and all
147 physical exertion. The women, however, sometimes appear

AKha A04
Miao AE5

A
M /460 cont./
147 somewhat soft /461/ and plaintive, especially in comparison
M with the Akha women, who are superior to them in hardiness, as
147 these people generally are in relation to the Meau. I found
482 among the Meau of both sexes particularly good and reliable
[609] porters, though, in general, they perform porter-service for strangers very unwillingly. After they had once declared themselves ready to come to terms, however, the men as well as the women, without another word, took on loads up to 50 kilograms, walked along with these on their backs so rapidly that we could hardly keep up with them, and steadfastly kept their promise.

M The opposite of this pronounced mountain-folk character
147 of the Meau is formed by their valley-dwelling neighbors, the
181 Lao and the Schan /Shan/, who represent typical tropical peo-
171 ple of the valley lowlands. They are accustomed to having Nature pour everything from her horn of plenty into their laps without any effort, they love idleness, and they are lazy and indolent, for a single annual harvest abundantly feeds the family. They, too, are cheerful, but unreliable and flighty. The Lao were indeed easy to persuade to serve as porters, but they would complain even if the loads weighed only 18 kilograms and usually ran away after one day!

M The Meau treat women and children, as well as the
576 subordinates and unfree (see the chapter, "Social Organization," the section, "Age Classes, Secret Societies, Rank Organization") well throughout and are courteous to superiors without being
M humble. Abadie (1) also points out: "The Meau women are
157

1. Page 151.

cheerful, gay, and not very shy, especially when they have acquired confidence."

M Among one another the Meau are very friendly and
571 have a pronounced property sense. Whereas with regard to foreign
[648] people any violation of their property rights immediately arouses
[152] their warlike instincts, among the unmarried lads even the female sex cannot provoke any deep enmities; for these reasons duels
M are unknown. Such behavior is quite plausible in view of their
577

39: Bernatzik--678 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand A01
Miao AE5

T 147 563 /501 cont./ the humid tropics and in which thousands of Whites had settled. The bearers of such European names, however, are today no longer distinguishable in any way from their black neighbors.

Even today, the mountain peoples of Farther India in Thailand live exclusively at altitudes between 1,000 and 2,000 meters, where the climate is essentially different from that in the tropical valleys. Just as in the case of the Whites who were still unfamiliar with controlling tropical diseases, the tropics are the ruin of the mountain peoples when they try to settle in the valleys. I myself was able to confirm this repeatedly. For example, the Lahu allowed themselves /502/ to be pushed into lower regions in places in northwest Thailand and in a period of a few years suffered crushing losses from tropical epidemics. Again, among the Meau, I observed that even a temporary sojourn in the valley lowlands of the Lao produced severe malaria epidemics among them. In Kengtung, where the mountain peoples, especially the Akha and Lisu, who visit the markets of the Schan /Shan/ need only a stay of one single night in the region of the market to be infected.

This inability of the mountain tribes to become acclimated has also drawn the attention of other authors. In the literature there are noteworthy comments on this subject, which stand in marked contrast to the opinion of Heine-Geldern (1),

1. II, Vol. II, p. 746.

who, to be sure, did not have the opportunity to study conditions on the spot. He writes: "However much individual tribes cling to the mountains, the important step down into the plains is taken at a favorable opportunity." Now as far as the Meau and Lahu are concerned, there can be no doubt that this step was repeatedly attempted, but it is likewise certain that it was always unsuccessful and the mountain people each time had to pay for the attempt with heavy biological losses. Lajonquière (2)

M [147] [166] [648]

2. II, p. 311.

/502 cont./

T 147 166 563 M 147 166 648 gives a typical example in describing the struggles of the Meau with a Thai people, the Tho, who had been defeated by the Meau: "Be that as it may, the surviving 'Tho' would have had to emigrate if the Meau had been able to become acclimatized in the low-lying valleys where the greatest number of wet-rice fields are. Happily for the Tho, the conquerors were unable to hold out in the heavy and humid atmosphere of the lowlands and had to return as quickly as possible to higher altitudes, leaving behind for the former owners all the rice fields lying below an altitude of 800 meters."

Maspero, too, made interesting observations. He speaks of the dispersed Meau groups in Tonkin who live as enclaves between foreign peoples and are completely separated from the main tribe. He proceeds literally: "They would have completely lost their individuality if they had not been incapable of acclimatizing themselves below an altitude of 800 to 1,000 meters; that has saved them."

It is interesting that Von Eickstedt (3) touches upon the same

3. III, p. 5.

subject, but from the /503/ economic aspect. He writes, for instance: "Miao in the plains are actually no longer Miao; it simply cannot be -- they would then have to become Chinese or Thai if only for economic reasons."

T 563 177 How strongly the manner of settlement of the mountain peoples is tied to climatic prerequisites is also shown by the fact that while among the tribes settled in southwest China plow-cultivation and livestock-raising form the economic bases, in Thailand only hoe-cultivation is practiced. The breeding of cattle and horses was likewise abandoned in places in Thailand if the new living area demanded it. Here we clearly see that the cultural change, in these cases an impoverishment, is conditioned by the racially determined inability of the peoples in question to adapt to the tropics, in other words, by their genetic make-up.